**Opening of Telephone Exchanges in the Villages of North-Eastern Region**

*293. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's policy to remove the disparity that exists in the North East in comperision to other States as regards the telecommunication facilities;

(b) whether Government have any policy to connect villages by cable telephones by establishing Telephone Exchanges in important village centres of this region in near future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Telecommunication facilities in North Eastern States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura are technologically comparable with other States. North Eastern States including Assam has a total switching capacity of 3.7 lakh lines with 2.9 lakh working connections. All the telephone exchanges in the region are of Electronic type. In fact North Eastern States are having the distinction to be 1st in the country to have all exchanges of Electronic type. Also, most of the facilities like ISDN and Internet has already been introduced in State Capitals of N.E. States and is being introduced in other cities progressively. However, the telephone penetration is less than the national average in all the States except Mizoram where the tele-density is 2.25 against the national average of 1.84 as on 31.3.98.

(b) and (c) Telephone exchanges are opened based upon demand. Telephones in villages may be given on Cables, Wireless or Satellite based technology depending upon location.

**Non-Computerised Branches of LIC**

*294. SHRI ANIL SHARMA:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 65 given in Rajya Sabha on 23rd February 1999, and state:

(a) the names of places where branches of LIC have not yet been computerised;

(b) by what time these branches would be computerised;

(c) the number of requests received from policy holders of the LIC branches located in Faridabad, Narnaul and Shimla seeking cumulative statements; and

(d) the details of action taken by the said branches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN):

(a) At present there are 168 branches of LIC which have not yet been computerised. The names of these branches are given in the statement. (*see* below)

(b) LIC expects that computerisation of these branches will be completed by June, 1999.

(c) and (d) LIC has reported that they do not maintain the record of number of requests received from policyholders seeking cumulative statements since the number is very large. The branches located in Faridabad, Narnaul and Shimla are computerised and cumulative statements are issued to policyholders on demand.